

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

December 21, 2017

Commission Members Present:

Reverend Turner, Chair
Joan Hash
Kui Zhao
Bob Ford
Hector Garcia, Jr.
Opel T. Jones, I
Shiraz Ahmed
Scott Markow
Shivani Aghera
Sharon Jeon

Commission Members Absent:

Peter Hwang
Bianca Chang

Staff:

Stephanie Chapple, Recording Secretary
Dr. Barbara J. Sands, HRC Executive Secretary
Cynthia Peltzman, HRC Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – N/A

3. HRC CASES UPDATE – LEGAL COUNSEL – Appeal for Case No. 17-11-011 was denied. HRC Counsel explained detailed instructions re. Open Meetings Act & Moving into Closed Session. Counsel and Chair went through checklist for going into closed session. Commissioner Opel made motion to go into closed session to review cases; Commissioner Shiraz seconded the motion – all members present approved (Commissioners Sharon, Kui, Scott, Chair Turner, Shiraz, Joan, Bob, Hector, Opel, and Shivani).

4. APPROVE MINUTES – November minutes approved.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT – See Chair's Report.

Discussion – Volunteer needed for Open Meeting Acts Training. Scott and Hector volunteered. Stephanie will re-circulate email from Legal Counsel (M. Goldmeier) for other who may be interested.

Budget – HRC requesting to increase budget for training, conferences, awards, contractual services and outreach.

Training - \$5,000; Contractual - \$10,000. Trainings also offered through IOAHRA, NAHRA and MACo. Stephanie will email dates of conferences once confirmed.

Play “Disgraced” – moved to spring 2019. Hector suggested inviting Superintendent to a future meeting. Reverend Turner agreed, and will draft invitation correspondence. Per Dr. Sands, HRC will offer support only by advertising on website and sharing flyer to those in your email group lists, etc.

Attendance – Stephanie will forward updated attendance chart to Chair turner to include Nov & Dec. If you are absent after 3 consecutive meetings, a conversation will be had if this is the right time to serve.

Faith Based Forum and Dialogue on Isms that Divide Us – See Chair's report. Four county-wide conversation circles being held Feb. through May, with culminating event on 6/4, 6:30p at SJBC.

- Community – NAHRA (Nat'l Assoc of HR Agencies) and IAOHRA (Internat'l Assoc of Official HR Agencies) are encouraging all HR Commissioners to attend ethnic community organizations meetings so that members will have a finger on concerns, questions, etc. in those communities. Per Dr. Sands, in Howard County there are approximately 30 ethnic organizations. Funds were also requested in the budget for travel. Chair Turner will ask Peter to oversee/manage this process. Commissioners are asked to consider which community meeting each member plans to attend and work with, etc.

CR-180 Follow-Up – Kui will meet with Stephanie (HCLS) on 12/26. Bianca and Bob spoke to Director of Diversity who will follow-up by end of year. **

Discussion – Joan recommended a follow-up letter should be sent to the Council confirming that HRC has a few outstanding items, and that members are working on those items to include a set deadline date. Hector made a motion to send the letter to update the Council on activities that will be finalized in the upcoming year (re. CR-180). Joan seconded the motion. All approved. Chair Turner will draft correspondence, & circulate to all members prior to sending final correspondence to Council members.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Finance & Fair Lending with Housing – *Scott/Shiraz volunteered to serve on this committee.*
- Legislation – *Bob/Kui* – No report.
- Education, Public Safety and Student Life Committee – *Reverend Turner, Opel* – Please refer to Chair's report above re. Faith Based Forum & Dialogue on Isms that Divide Us as a follow up to the Nov. 20th Faith Forum hosted by Congressman Cummings, featuring Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Rev. Paige Getty and Rev. Turner. Student Commissioner Sharon joined this committee.
- HRC Awards Committee – *Bianca, Opel, Hector* – Per Hector, committee members are circulating forms to nominate individuals and organizations for 2018. Per Chair Turner, winners can be awarded during their community meetings, as well as, HRC to host a culminating large event to highlight all award recipients.
- Human Trafficking Committee – *Peter, Shiraz and Joan* – Per Dr. Sands, new Human Trafficking Coordinator was hired. Several meetings have been held; KITS are (always) needed for victims. Please refer to list of items needed circulated by Stephanie.
 - ACTION - please bring those items to the February meeting.
- LGBTQ Committee – *Opel, Bob* – Bob shared sad news that the 30th Transgender person was murdered. Per Bob, this is a small community which makes this tragedy impact the transgender community in such devastating ways.
- Aging, Disability and Health Care Committee – *Bianca* – see hard copy report submitted by Bianca.
- HRC Goals Committee – *Peter, Bianca, Rev. Turner* – Per Chair Turner, HRC is moving forward with budget & shared with Dr. Sands various trainings and conferences Commissioners plan to participate in for 2018.
- Nominating Committee – *Shiraz, Peter, Joan, Shivani* – No report.
- Student Report – Sharon will confirm what area of outreach she plans to work on for her term. One member will mentor/assist her once Sharon confirms her chosen interest.

7. STAFF REPORT – See written report submitted. OHR to date closed 96 cases. Walk-ins and calls for appointments are increasing even as the holiday season approaches. A celebration of KWANZAA hosted by OHR is scheduled on 12/26 at the Laurel Community Center. Numerous community organizations will participate including NAACP, Voices of Change, Center for African American Culture, a Grandmother's Cry & others. MLK Commission will host its annual MLK Day of Celebration and Day of Service on Sun, 1/14 and Mon, 1/15. Commissioners are encouraged to attend these events, as well as, share flyer with others. OHR adopted a family in need for the holiday.

8. NEW BUSINESS –

- Election of 2018 Chair and Vice Chair – Commissioner Opel made motion to nominate Commissioner Shiraz for Chair. After discussion and point of clarification from HRC Counsel re. term limit, Opel rescinded his initial nomination. Commissioner Kui made motion for 2 nominations for Chair; Reverend Turner and Joan. Shiraz nominated Reverend Turner for Chair, Commissioner Bob seconded the motion. Commissioner Opel nominated Shiraz as Vice Chair, Chair Turner seconded the motion. Commissioner Joan nominated Commissioner Bianca as Vice Chair. Commissioner Kui nominated Joan as Vice Chair. Discussion was held re. whether a Commissioner can nominate someone who is not present during nominations. Per Chair Turner “as with past practice, and in the spirit of past practice, I would like to continue conferring with someone before nominating the person.” Motion was made to close nominations for 2 nominations for Vice Chair – Shiraz and Joan. Motion was seconded by Kui. Commissioner Scott moved to vote on Chair by affirmation. Move was seconded. All approved to affirm Reverend Turner as Chair for 2018. Commissioners submitted written votes for Vice Chair. Shiraz will be Vice Chair for 2018.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Joan wished everyone a happy holiday and a great new year. Per Hector, FIRN will have its 2nd International 5K on Sun, 3/25. Registration is \$20 until beginning of year. Hector will email flyer to Stephanie. Per Bob, NAACP will have 5K in mid-January. More information will follow.

10. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

****** - The tape recording reflects the statement from Commissioner Kui verbatim.
Please note update - Commissioner Kui made a mistake and said **Stephanie**, she meant to say **Stacy** at the Howard County Library System.